It is now some sixty years since the American "Dane," David Swenson, discovered the "Danish Socrates," Søren Kierkegaard. During the last twenty-five years Americans have had the opportunity of becoming well acquainted with Kierkegaardian reflection, both philosophical and theological. There has poured forth from the American presses not only the major works of this strange thinker, but also numerous attempts to present his life and the general tenor of his thought. Such attempts were both necessary and fruitful. This first stage of scholarship, however, although much needed and frequently well done, was but a preliminary to the work which is now beginning to appear. Professor Lowrie confessed to his limitations at interpretation, and many other have intended no more than an introductory presentation of "Kierkegaard in English." Further work of this kind may still be needed to clarify scholarly issues of a biographical nature, and to present to a new age, in their terms, the general structure of Kierkegaardian thought. It is the thesis of this essay, however, that we have entered the preliminary stages in a more significant task, and that American students have started to move to a second stage in Kierkegaardian scholarship.

In view of the strong theological aspect of Kierkegaard's thought, it appears somewhat strange, but nevertheless true, that the second stage of Kierkegaardian scholarship is more concerned with philosophy than with theology. Much of the concern with Kierkegaard's theology seems to remain at the level of introductory description and relatively little has been produced to date as serious theological analysis. His profound and complex analysis of sin, the uniqueness of his Christology, to say nothing of his analysis of God or Christian ethics, remain largely

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uninterpreted. In contradistinction to this situation some serious work is now being done on Kierkegaard as philosopher. It is this with which we shall be concerned, for it is in the realm of philosophy that American scholarship is coming into its own as far as the "Melancholy Dane" is concerned.

The second stage of such scholarship, concerned with Kierkegaard's philosophy, is of limited extent. The amount of such material, however, does not reflect the seriousness of the issues raised, which issues deserve careful attention. I shall not attempt to survey or condense the literature, and I shall be only slightly concerned to evaluate the proposals as adequate or proper interpretations of Kierkegaard. I am rather concerned to note the central philosophical issues which are emerging from this discussion and which are of interest, not merely as conflicting interpretations of the historical Kierkegaard, but more especially as issues of theoretical and philosophical significance on the contemporary scene. I shall be concerned to note conflicting issues of interpretation but also to present these as basic issues for contemporary philosophy; for the historical commentators, in reporting upon Kierkegaard, are really implying philosophical suggestions for modern man. They are frequently commenting on Kierkegaard as a way of proposing adequate suggestions for contemporary philosophy, and thus it is the contemporary philosophical import of these problems upon which we shall concentrate. I shall not try to resolve these conflicts and the issues raised, but shall remain content to have noted the central issues which are being presented, to which modern philosophy need speak if it will deal with the questions posed by the nineteenth century Socrates. It is the unspoken and undefended thesis of this essay that these very issues underlie much of the confusion and debate in contemporary philosophy, but